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FOR US DELEGATION TO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

FOLLOWING REPEAT ASUNCION 0527 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 07.
QUOTE L

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FOR ARA/ECA GRAHAM

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TAGS: SHUM, PA

SUBJ: REPLYING TO PROFESSOR ARENS

REF: STATE 28986

1. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THE DIFFICULTY OF REPLYING TO PROF. ARENS' REPORTS ABOUT PARAGUAY'S FOREST INDIANS. HIS ALLEGATIONS, INNUENDOS, AND EXAGGERATIONS ARE SUCH THAT IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL PAGES TO TRY TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE RECORD. FURTHERMORE, SINCE CERTAIN ABUSES AGAINST INDIANS HERE UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE OCCURRED
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IN THE PAST AND MAY AGAIN IN THE FUTURE, ANY EFFORT TO REBUTT PROF. ARENS RISKS GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF APOLOGIZING FOR THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT WHEN IT MAY JUSTIFIABLY DESERVE SOME CRITICISM.

2. IN REPLYING TO INQUIRIES IT MAY RECEIVE ABOUT PROF. ARENS' REPORTS, THE EMBASSY PROPOSES TO TAKE NOTE OF PROF. ARENS'

QUALIFICATIONS TO SPEAK AS AN AUTHORITY ABOUT PARAGUAY, AND TO SUGGEST THAT INTERESTED PERSONS ALSO CONSULT OTHER EXPERT OPINION WHICH MAY BE AT VARIANCE WITH WHAT PROF. ARENS HAS WRITTEN. IT WILL ALSO PROVIDE ITS OWN VERY GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION OF PARAGUAY'S FOREST INDIANS. THE FOLLOWING IS AN OUTLINE OF WHAT THE EMBASSY INTENDS TO SAY:

A. RICHARD ARENS, A PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, VISITED PARAGUAY FOR THE FIRST TIME BETWEEN AUGUST 18-SEPTEMBER 1, 1977, UNDER SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL AUSPICES. HIS TWO WEEK VISIT FOLLOWED BY SEVERAL MONTHS THE PUBLICATION OF "GENOCIDE IN PARAGUAY", WHICH HE EDITED. THIS BOOK INTER-ALIA COMPARES THE ALLEGED FATE OF PARAGUAY'S SEVERAL HUNDRED ACHE INDIANS TO WHAT HAPPENED TO SEVERAL MILLION EUROPEAN JEWS AS A RESULT OF THE NAZI HOLOCAUST. NOW THAT HE HAS BEEN TO PARAGUAY, PROF. ARENS PURPORTS TO SPEAK AS AN AUTHORITY ON THAT COUNTRY.

B. PROF. ARENS SPEAKS NEITHER SPANISH, THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF PARAGUAY, NOR GUARANI, AN INDIAN LANGUAGE WHICH IS THE PREDOMINANT LANGUAGE OF ALL PARAGUAYANS. MOST OF PARAGUAY'S PEASANTS (WHO ARE A MIXTURE OF INDIAN AND EUROPEAN PEOPLES) SPEAK ONLY GUARANI. WHATEVER INFORMATION PROF. ARENS GLEANED WHILE VISITING PARAGUAY THEREFORE CAME TO HIM THROUGH AT LEAST ONE AND SOMETIMES SEVERAL INTERMEDIARIES.

:(2#-53;34 #8 17-)8*8:-589, , PROF. ARENS IS NOT THE ONLY AUTHORITY ON PARAGUAY NOR ON PARAGUAY'S FOREST INDIANS. FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL OPINIONS WHICH DIFFER MARKEDLY FROM PROF. ARENS' (WHOSE FIELD IS INTERNATIONAL LAW RATHER THAN ANTHROPOLOGY), WE SUGGEST CONSULTING DR. ROBERT SMITH, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT KANSAS UNIVERSITY, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED TO THE U.S. AFTER A FULL YEAR OF INTENSIVE STUDY AND FIELD WORK IN PARAGUAY. PROFESSOR SMITH HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH THE ACHE, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER GROUPS. ANOTHER PROFESSIONAL ANTHROPOLOGIST WHO DOES NOT SUPPORT PROF. ARENS' CONCLUSIONS IS MR. JOHN RENSCHAW, A BRITON, WHO HAS BEEN IN PARAGUAY STUDYING THE FOREST INDIANS SINCE DECEMBER 1976. MR. RENSCHAW, LIKE PROF. ARENS, IS SPONSORED BY SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL.

D. THE INDIAN RESERVATION OFFICIALS WHO PROF. ARENS CLAIMS ARE DELIBERATELY STARVING THE ACHE (AMONG OTHER ABUSES) INCLUDE MISSIONARIES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIVINE WORD ORDER, AND OF THE NEW TRIBES MISSION, A WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN PROTESTANT GROUP ACTIVE IN SEVERAL PARTS OF LATIN AMERICA. THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC MISSIONARY GROUPS ASSISTING PARAGUAY'S INDIANS, THE LARGEST OF WHICH ARE THE MENNONITES, WHO ARE ACTIVE AMONG 10,000 INDIANS IN THE CHACO. INQUIRIES REGARDING ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING MISTREATMENT OF INDIANS MIGHT USE-

FULLY BE DIRECTED TO ANY OR ALL OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS.
E. THE U.S. MISSION ITSELF (COMPRISING EMBASSY OFFICERS, AID
OFFICIALS AND PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS) HAS INVESTIGATED ALLEGATIONS
CONCERNING FOREST INDIANS, INCLUDING THE ACHE. WE CANNOT
SUBSTANTIATE WHAT PROF. ARENS HS ALLEGED IS AN OFFICIAL PARAGUAYAN
GOVERNMENT POLICY OF TORTURE, ENSLAVEMENT, AND/OR OTHER DELIBERATE
MISTREATMENT OF INDIANS. AS IN THE COLONIZATION OF OUR OWN
COUNTRY, INSTANCES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTS OF CRUELTY BETWEEN
FOREST INDIANS AND PEASANTS CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED, BUT APPEAR
TO BE INCREASINGLY RARE AS THE AUTHORITIES HAVE SOUGHT TO
REDUCE AREAS OF FRICTION BETWEEN COMPETING CULTURES AND TO
EXTEND THEIR PROTECTION TO THE FEW REMAINING UNASSIMILATED
INDIANS IN PARAGUAY.

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3. DEPARTMENT MAY TREAT POINTS IN OUTLINE ABOVE AS UNCLASSIFIED.
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